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**Psychological Transformations based on Ideals
and Representations of the Self,
Expressed in “Humorous-Formative” Graphic Literature**

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Abstract

The literary genre “Bildungsroman,” also known as the coming-of-age novel or educational-formative novel, in the form of “*Bildungsroman*” graphic stories is addressed in this research. We are interested in the importance of constructing utopian versus dystopian visions of the world, with their resulting emotions and feelings that arise from the “hero’s/heroine’s” struggles against antagonistic events and circumstances resulting from own personal experiences and impulses. The reader-spectator will be shown how these narratives are technically and artistically expressed in humorous, satirical, or comical ways. Our working hypothesis is that this literary genre effectively demonstrates psychological realities and circumstances with which the reader-spectator can identify by becoming involved in idealized scenarios, developing and transforming awareness, as well as improving a self-esteem. Educational-formative humorous graphic novels acquire the status of “clinical-pedagogical instruments” since they open, for clinicians and non-professional audiences, the possibility of a deep understanding of critical periods of development, as well as the steps to follow in order to enhance next stages of mental and psychological growth.

Key words

Adolescent Narratives, Bildungsroman, Humorous Graphic Novel, Literary Science, Aesthetics, Psychoanalysis of Adolescent, Young Adult Discourse

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**Психологические трансформации, основанные на идеалах
и представлениях о себе,
выраженные в «юмористически-формирующей»
графической литературе**

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Аннотация

Мы подходим к литературному жанру «Bildungsroman», также известному как роман «выход из возраста», в котором мы находим образовательно-формирующие графические истории. В этом исследовании мы занимаемся значимостью построения утопических и антиутопических видений мира с его вытекающими эмоциями и чувствами, которые возникают из борьбы героя/героини с антагонистическими событиями и обстоятельствами. Зрителю-читателю будет показано, как эти повествования технически и художественно выражены в юмористических, сатирических или комических способах. Наша рабочая гипотеза заключается в том, что этот жанр литературы эффективно демонстрирует психологические реальности и обстоятельства, с которыми читатель-зритель отождествляет себя, вовлекаясь в идеализированные образы, развивая и трансформируя критерии, а также самообладание. Аналогичное явление можно также наблюдать в японских мангах вместе с так называемыми «видеоиграми». Юмористические графические образовательно-формирующие романы приобретают статус «клинико-педагогических инструментов», поскольку открывают для врачей и непрофессиональной аудитории возможность понимания шагов, которые необходимо предпринять для перехода на следующую стадию психического и психологического развития.

Ключевые слова

юмор, подростковые рассказы, роман воспитания, юмористический графический роман, литературоведение, эстетика, психоанализ подросткового и юношеского дискурса

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1. Introduction and Purpose of the Study

The investigation of affects and emotions resulting from human interrelations related to adolescent and early youth narratives, both those corresponding to their initial period of emergence and their persistence and extension into later stages of development, has been a particular topic of our previous interest (Bautista, 2023, 2025). Specifically, we have focused on the study of “conceptual art.” Therefore, our observations have led us to recognize the great potential this style has for understanding deep psychological issues at the social and community level, as well as for increasing our capacities for perception, sensitivity, and individual approach, that are necessary in the professional practice of psychology, among other sciences.

The use of humorous and caricature-like devices, as well as jokes, has been characteristic of various art styles as well, ranging from avant-garde movements such as Surrealism, Cubism, Dadaism, Fauvism, Pop Art, especially Conceptual Art, among others, to the so-called “outsider” artistic expressions, characteristic of marginalization and mental illness. In this sense, the art of children and some adolescents is also generally considered “outsider art.” Therefore, in most of these aforementioned expressions, regardless of their medical-psychiatric, diagnostic-psychological, or artistic-aesthetic meaning and interpretation, we find comedy and humor as relevant characteristics.

In order to follow up on the line raised above, we propose an investigation of the literary version that we believe corresponds to the aforementioned contemporary style, which can be found within the “Bildungsroman” genre. In this way, we construct our universe of study based on the variant known as the “graphic novel”, to which we can add the terms: “humorous-formative.” Our justification is grounded in the fact that when the researcher has access to empirical material that displays a cartoonish visual language intertwined or coupled with every day “speech genres” (Bakhtin, 1986), the possibility opens up for new analyses and interpretations related to transformations of adolescent narratives, from scientific and aesthetic disciplines. This offers, in particular, knowledge of great clinical-diagnostic, didactic-pedagogical, and therapeutic-preventive utility, since, at the level of sensitivity and emotions, it allows us to approach both the individual-personal and the group-community levels. The objective of this study has led us to clarify, understand, and “listen” to the essential characteristics concerning aspirations, shortcomings, needs, and affective/emotional difficulties characteristic of narratives related to the developmental period in question. Our task also leads us to detect and recognize obstacles through the presence versus absence of “internal dialogues,” induced in the viewer-reader both by the structure and assembly of the “humorous-formative” graphic text and by the symbolic-narrative content.

Our psychoanalytic working hypothesis proposes that the viewer-reader, by protectively identifying with the role of the imaginary “protagonist” acting in a

specific realistic comic scenario, finds a path to knowledge about pleasurable instinctual expressions, as well as internal readjustment in relation to ideals and self-representations. We believe that the latter emerge as a result of contact and communication with present or past self-referential experiences, evoked in memory preconsciously, from an interrelationship between the text's "humorous" content and its "visual-graphic" structure. A literary review of the genre leads us to assume that both elements belong to the formative narrative breakdown characteristic of the "Bildungsroman" literary style, resulting in the emotional interaction between the work, the reader, and the viewer. We believe that, in a similar sense, "Japanese manga," or even certain types of video games, would also fall within this type of artistic expression corresponding to contemporary cultural discourse. The implicit purpose of these artistic manifestations, in this case literary, is to offer the reader-spectator both ways of recognizing, discharging, diverting or concealing instinctive and affective aspects, as well as possibilities of repair and construction of alternatives, thus establishing a differentiation between one's own world and the collective imagination, in its "utopian" versus "dystopian" conception.

2. Methodology and operationalization of the study

2.1. Case study and analysis: Using various methodological and interpretive criteria, we have proposed the graphic novel "*Rules of School Survival*" by Russian-Canadian writer Esvelana Shmakova (Mig comics. Mann, Ubanof, and Ferder. Moscow, 2023, 4th edition) as a "case study." We establish five axes for analysis and interpretation:

A) Analysis of narrative technique and structure (form analysis method) (Bautista, 2025; Reiche, 2001, 2011; Oevermann, 1993).

B) Analysis of intercultural and psychoethnographic characteristics (Erdheim, 1985).

C) Analysis of the dynamics of socialization and group and intergenerational interrelations (group analysis, dialogue, and scenic reconstruction methods) (Lorenzer, 2010).

D) Analysis of the protagonist's characteristics and construction of identity and emotions (psychoanalytic psychological analysis method: drives, desires, fantasies, and feelings expressed in self-representations) (Bion, 1959; Freud, 2013; 2017; Klein, 1937).

E) Idealizations and representations of the hero (literary analysis method, hero resources, renunciations, and negotiations). (Koval, 2018; Sumalla, 2003)

3. Architecture of the novel

3.1. Description of the structure and technique: The work consists of 210 color pages, a description of color resources be provided in the following section. In order to give greater emphasis to our method, we have concentrated our analysis on the first chapter, which runs from pages 5 to 36 and contains a total of

172 frames or panels distributed across 5 or 6 panels located on three levels on each page. Regarding the dialogues expressed in written language, these present multiple variations in dimensions, typography, and location within each panel, as well as in each indication referring to auditory or sound expressions. It is also worth noting the frequent introduction of “silent” panels, either empty or with figures, which function as connectors and are a means of representing strong emotions graphically and symbolically. On the other hand, we can observe that the graphic representations of vocal and auditory manifestations, such as “screams,” “exclamations of surprise,” “joy,” “anger,” and “laughter,” as well as “external noises” from the performance areas, are freely distributed within or outside the texts, sometimes spanning several panels, and with different sizes and colors in the corresponding frames. The written language related to the author’s “narrative self,” expressed in “explanations” or “comments” explaining the development of the drama, is found printed within small squares located on the sides, above, or below the panels, their location is been shared with the representation of the instructions issued by someone who represents an “authority” voice within the scenes, although in each case the use of specific fonts stands out, as mentioned. Regarding the representation of spoken dialogue, that is, the written language that represents the verbalizations or sounds emitted by the characters, the author uses the natural resource of any graphic novel, humorous literature, or even traditional comics, i.e. printed letters inside “balloons.” Regarding the latter, we see them freely placed within the panels and connected to the protagonists who deliver the dialogue, linguistic expressions, as well as acoustic noises.

3.2. Description of the visual artistic work: Because this is a graphic novel, the drawings of the characters are depicted in a caricature-like manner. However, mostly pencil drawings preserve the image of real adolescents, except on brief occasions when they have been designed with distorted shapes. In such cases, they show exaggerated facial or body features, enlarged or diminished in relation to the actual proportions of the adolescents’ changing bodies. The artistic drawings of the characters have been designed with realistic colors in terms of skin tones and designs of clothing remaining as such throughout the novel. The artist-author consistently uses basic colors such as violet, brown, and briefly blue, giving them different shades, while all the designs are done on a white background. Only on a few occasions are the aforementioned colors mixed, resulting in a touch of tuché or soft pink. It is striking that “bright” colors or those regularly known for expressing strong emotions are almost absent, such as green, orange, yellow, deep navy blue, etc. The latter mentioned were practically excluded from the novel, except for pages 58-61, where they display a marked difference due to the author’s introduction of a rich multicolored palette in the design of the forms. As we will see later, this use of color becomes a representative element of the affective and emotional aspects that impact and emotionally involve the viewer-reader because they form an important part of satire and self-reference.

4. Development of the Drama

4.1. Location of the Space. The drama takes place within a high school with modern buildings, where classrooms, laboratories, a library, hallways, courtyards, and gardens leading to the school and other buildings can be seen. Eventually, the artist shows us drawings of an archaeological museum, as well as an urban setting with some streets and single-family homes in the neighborhood near the school, which maintain a Californian, middle-class Canadian architectural style.

4.2. Description and Characteristics of the Main Characters

A) Penelope Torres. “Peppi,” as her friends at school call her, is the main protagonist or “heroine.” She is a girl who is depicted as having a slim, petite body, still with traces of childlike and delicate features. Apparently, based on her last name, she comes from a Latin American family or has such family background. She has dark hair and wears her medium-length hair in a ponytail. “Peppi” was transferred to a new school. At the beginning of the drama, she is introduced as a girl quite concerned about the first impression she will have to make on her classmates. She appears friendly and cooperative, although she also expresses discomfort and anxiety, wanting to correct her mistakes and establish and maintain optimal contact with her classmates. From the beginning of the novel, we see “Peppi” as a girl who appears shy and somewhat clumsy, but on the other hand, she is proactive and sincere, ashamed of what she considers “mistakes,” which she sincerely intends to correct. It is striking that throughout the novel, “Peppi” gradually changes her behavior in the scenario described by the author, to the point where she becomes the leader of the group, being able to display creativity and initiative and “saves” her group from a “disaster,” thus taking on the role of an “epic heroine.”

B) Jaime Thomson. This boy has similar physical characteristics to “Peppi,” and his body reflects his developmental stage. Jaime is small and thin, and is considered as the “nerd” of his group, based on the fact that he is always reading a book and appears to be shy and quiet. Regarding his peer group, he is part of the “scientists” group and actively participates in the team’s proposals. He eventually meets “Peppi,” whom he sees as a great companion, and with whom later in the drama he establishes a friendly relationship outside of school, including with Peppi’s family.

C) Miss Tobins (Miss Ti). She is a member of the school’s teaching staff, runs the science lab, and enjoys riding motorcycles, which makes her appear rebellious and youthful. However, she has a strong character, is determined, and plays her role of authority firmly and confidently, denoting great satisfaction with her work as a science teacher. She maintains a supportive and protective relationship with “Peppi,” finding ways to recognize and value her ideas.

D) Mr. Ramírez. He is a member of the school’s teaching staff and is in charge of coordinating the art club. He is apparently a man of Latino origin whose sincere demeanor shows great concern for his students’ academic performance, to the point of resorting to obsessive behavior, which in some ways hinders the group’s per-

formance. He is a character who expresses his emotions dramatically; he takes his group's failures personally, although his students view his reactions with respect, as he provides sufficient support and empathy for the group's sentiments.

E) The members of the art club. This is a group of students to which "Peppi" belongs, with whom she finds common ground and interests due to their shared interest in drawing, painting, and the arts in general. The protagonists and participants of this group develop cooperation with the support of a leader who is proactive and quite directive, thus developing important group synergies to meet the required levels of competition and participation. Among its participants are other girls with whom "Peppi" begins to establish relationships of intimacy, trust, and friendship.

F) The members of the natural sciences club. This is a group of students who maintain a level of competition, even rivalry, sometimes exaggerated, towards the members of the drawing club. Its main representatives are "Derek" and "Ashiek," two boys who struggle to control their impulsiveness. They engage in activities that break the rules and affect the general coexistence of the students. For this reason, they frequently require the establishment of limits, both by their coordinator, Miss Tobins, and by the additional group members.

5. Narrative Sequence

5.1. Chapter One

For reasons that are not explained, "Peppi" (the heroine) arrives for the first time at Beribrook Middle School, having transferred from another school. In the first scene, on the first day, during the first hour of school, "Peppi" suffers an unfortunate incident: she trips and falls heavily to the floor, having dropped her school supplies. This is the cause of intense ridicule from the boys and girls around her. Jaime Thomson, the "nerdy" boy at school, who has apparently also been the target of ridicule before, comes to her aid. (see: figure No. 1) When "Peppi" receives Jaime's help, she panics when she hears the laughter and mocking expressions about her, feeling extremely ashamed, so she categorically rejects her classmate and quickly flees the scene of the embarrassing incident. However, in subsequent scenes, we see "Peppi" reflect on her behavior during her fall, deciding to secretly apologize to him, though, without finding the right opportunity to do so and acting with great embarrassment and evasiveness throughout. She finally manages to meet Jaime face to face during an extracurricular tutoring session for his biology class assignment proposed by Miss Tu, although it will not be until later (Chapter 3) that "Peppi" will face her own shame by offering the long-awaited apology. Meanwhile, returning to the continuity of the scenes from the first chapter, we see that, in the classroom of the art group, which "Peppi" has now joined, a great commotion arises, since, this year, its members have been notified that they have been surpassed in performance by the natural sciences group. However, the art team, supported by Mr. Ramirez, and guided by the efficient school leader "Maribela," confidently promotes group motivation, maintaining high spirits and optimism. The group is now committed to

carry out a “comic book” project; a proposal that will be entered into the upcoming school festival. (End of chapter)



Fig. 1 (Page # 5)



Fig. 2 (Page # 60)



Fig. 3 (Page # 209)

Annotation. As a summary of the following chapters (2–5), the protagonist gradually overcomes her deep fears of rejection and distancing from her peers, as well as the psychological resistance to afford necessary confidence and trust in her-

self. Finally, by establishing alliances with both peers and female authority figures, she primarily manages to get rid of the aforementioned emotional obstacles, leading to proposals for group integration. She takes on the role of leader, replacing the former one who suddenly leaves the school, thus “Peppi” manages to make proposing collaborative work, creating alliances, and carrying out activities related to sensitivity and creativity as well.

6. Analysis and Interpretation

6.1. General Aspects: The book “Rules of Survival” deals with the difficulties a pre-adolescent girl faces in dealing with the problems that arise when she joins her peer group in a new school environment. From the first panels, the author manages to show the characteristics of adolescent emotions, allowing the reader to see the world through the eyes of the main character. For the latter, what is most important is her adaptation to her new school, which is why she tries to integrate into the new group, living according to the rules that the group has automatically and unconsciously developed, but feeling vulnerable. The importance of a successful school life, according to the heroine’s perspective, is evident in the emotional experiences related to the successes and failures that must occur when learning and following the series of “unwritten and unspoken” rules; therefore, going to school becomes “a fight for survival,” as the book’s title suggests.

The heroine experiences an internal struggle within herself: the preservation of individuality as well as belonging to a peer group. We can see in “Peppi,” a strong impulse to belong that emerges; that is, she expresses an intense desire to see her individuality projected by being part of a group that coincides with her interests. “Peppi” places great importance on her participation within the group, to the point that she is herself forced to reject the boy who approaches for giving help, succumbing to the scorn and laughter of her peers, according to the story. For “Peppi,” survival lies in recognizing and being recognized as assertive and proactive, something she finally achieves at the end of the novel. However, the integration she strives for from the beginning of the drama is not without great suffering. In order to avoid her fears of not being accepted by her peers, she resorts to a measure of rejection. Faced with this matter, “Peppi” must struggle for a time with intense shame, as well as feelings of guilt and confusion. It is at this moment that the heroine learns for the first time to confront her still-childish fears of rejection and abandonment.

6.2. The ideals seen throughout the technique representations. By graphically presenting the figures of several characters in their early adolescence, the author-artist draws our attention to the fact that, the figures of the protagonists remain without substantial physical modifications during the period covered, that is, without apparently bodily transformations. Despite the fact that, as we know, during the aforementioned stage, changes sometimes arise in surprising and frequent ways, for example, in bodily aspects: girls begin to glimpse the plane of feminine beauty, whilst in boys, changes in hearing and voice, among other substantial ones, appear

more prominently (Bloss, 1983). We believe that by showing the characters without major physical changes, the author's intention is to provide the reader-spectator with an image with which identification and emotional involvement can occur through the visual repetition of the figures. It is as if, on the one hand, we were seeing the same painting repeatedly, while on the other, the development of the scenes seen in the narrative breakdown became referential, meaning that the reader-spectator recognizes similar experiences. Furthermore, the psychological atmosphere of confusion evoked by the sequence of dialogues, in which we can witness negative and threatening emotions such as intimidation, rivalry, frustration, deception, and betrayal, among others, related to group dynamics, causes the reader-spectator to see him/herself as just another participant in the teams' attempts at organization. In this sense we – as probable involved participants- also develop the expectation that co-operation among team members will eventually manifest itself in creative behaviors and group synergy. In this way, the interrelation between the visual design and the unfolding drama achieves a point of equilibrium and balance, with the continuous presence of the figure drawings, rendered consistently within a single format and figures, mixed with the vitality, emotionality, and dramatic intensity of the scenes.

The above argument is strongly linked to the use of the color palette, whose continuity and chromatic expression are preserved unchanged throughout the narrative drama. The aforementioned discoloration, seen in dull, dry tones and shades, lacking in brightness or luminosity, is manifested, for example, in the fact that it is impossible to determine what year's season the scenes correspond to, as well as what colors prevail in the "painting studio" too. Continuing this line of thought regarding the author-artist's use of color, the protagonist—"Peppi"—has a moment of "flight" or "psychological evasion" when, in a museum, a scientist-adventurer presents his research's results. "Peppi" becomes immersed and involved, through a great deal of imagination and fantasy, in the conception of an imaginary and idyllic situation, remaining in absolute abstraction, as well as noticeably removed from her present and real location. Precisely at that moment, supported by the artist-author's technical handling, we observe that "Peppi's" world acquires alternative tones, colors, and brightness, artistically combined (see figure No. 2). The latter turns out to be a symbolic example of the possibilities of reaching a longed-for utopian dimension, precisely of an ideal and a self-representation, in relation to the change she yearns for in the future. As we have stated elsewhere (Bautista, 2025) a "nostalgia for the future" has been shown in this scenery from which the adolescent girl attempts to build her path; based on this ideal fantasy, the little heroine expresses with great astonishment: "*Can a person really see all this?!*" (p. 62, panel no. 1). Evidently, the developmental process proposed by the literary theory of hero transformation, as well as theoretical experience, suggests that "Peppi" will gradually have to negotiate, adapt to, and manage (Koval, 2018) her current circumstances in order to find her identity, that is, the transformation for a future, mature life.

6.3. Affects and Emotions. In relation to the intercultural aspects raised in the novel, some intercultural characteristics are striking, for instance, the surname of

the protagonist and that of the art group director. In addition, the latter expresses himself physically and verbally in a rather emotional and sensitive manner with his students, similar to the emotional expressions of so-called “warm cultures.” Both surnames appear to come from a family tree of Hispanic origin. Likewise, we see female figures covered in hijab, a garment typically worn by Muslim women, with their hair and part of their neck covered. The remarks regarding surnames and garments are quite significant in a multicultural society such as Canadian. Our comment in this regard is directed at the fact that “Peppi” arrives at a new school after transferring from another school. We therefore assume that in this case, this is a covert projection of the book’s author-artist, who, according to the information gathered in her profile and biographical data, emigrated from the Russian Federation to Canada still being a teenager, similar to that of the characters presented.

Our hypothesis leads us to assume that the author experienced the process of adaptation and integration in the new country after have been transferred from a Russian school to a Canadian one. Therefore, if this was the case, she undoubtedly experienced the vicissitudes and details expressed by her main character in the novel regarding learning the “*rules of survival*” both in a new school and a new country. Our on the psychological effects related to emigration leads us to understand different phases that range from the initial idealization phase that arose before emigration, to the phase of “culture shock” upon arrival at the new place of residence, the purpose and motivation being to achieve cultural adaptation and integration through the use of coping mechanisms, contrary to the neurotic mechanisms that would lead to isolation and loneliness, among others. In this sense, the affective reactions that must be processed psychologically to varying degrees largely have to do with the sadness and nostalgia for one’s roots that prevail in the country of origin (Bautista, 1989), which, as we know, is none other than the country of childhood, which is full of great meanings based on early emotional ties. If we accept our assumption regarding the author-artist’s origin and emigration as valid, the novel’s drama turns out to be an excellent autobiographical example related to the emotional and affective experiences following the writer’s separation from her original roots, as well as to her efforts to reestablish internal order during a stage of psychosexual development in which personality development is destined to seek internal rearrangement and order on the psychophysiological, mental-cognitive, familial, and especially the socialization levels necessary for the establishment of social identity, as mentioned above. In short, the author-artist presents with excellent results through an autobiographical satire the confrontation and experiences related to a dual process: that of an adolescent narrative on the one hand, and on the other, the separation from the country of origin. Both procedures are linked to internal movements of change and transformation (see: figure No. 3).

6.4. Affective Bonds. In our research, we are struck by the fact that the positive outcome of the protagonist’s integration, expressed in the establishment of group synergies, brings into play two important and interrelated psychological aspects, which are difficult to express in the adolescent stage of both men and women. These

elements are closely related to the construction of both horizontal and vertical alliances; the former arise from socialization within the peer group, while the latter is related to authority figures, in this case, female ones. We believe that these are mechanisms of displacement and identification of “Peppi’s” initial alliance with the maternal figure. Therefore, we see a maternal foundation of trust and affection in the mother-daughter and daughter-mother relationship. We observe that “Peppi” constructs an ideal and a representation of herself as a woman, projecting these ideals onto relevant female figures. In this way, “Peppi” develops a special bond to Miss Ti, a scientist of a strong character and confidence, who also possesses knowledge of art, especially regarding the intersection of art, science, and nature. She makes this knowledge available to our heroine, awakening in her great admiration, curiosity, and intrigue about the interrelationship between these disciplines. Likewise, “Peppi” is quite amazed by the artistic work with paintings, designs, and sketches created by her classmate Jaime’s mother, who also expresses great confidence in “Peppi” in the creative aspects of painting, especially for having overcome the trauma of being disabled and wheelchair-bound. These are precisely the female role models from which the protagonist now draws, reaffirming Freud’s (1911, 1917) proposal in his text about *“The Family Novel of the Neurotic,”* in which he expresses that adolescents will seek sources of satisfaction for their libidinal drives outside the family nucleus. “Peppi” sublimates these impulses and channels them by identifying with idealized female figures, in which she finds a foundation through which she can deploy her skills as the new leader of the work team and find points of agreement and negotiation with the concurrent group. She does this through project proposals for joint creative work involving art and science, which once again indicates a sublimation of her instinctive impulses. She also acquires the strength to symbolically confront the holder of patriarchal power, represented by an absent, mechanical, and inert figure known as the school principal, who makes and administers “fair” decisions and communicating them using only the school loudspeaker, in an action to the society proposed by George Orwell in his dystopian novel “1984.” In this way, “Peppi” (as well as the author) manages to break through the barrier of paternal domination, by creating a work that allows for collective socialization based on “creativity,” a current word with which the “formative graphic novel” concludes.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Our analysis and interpretation methodology has allowed us to visualize idealizations and concepts of self in a period of development in which continuous internal diatribes arise, regarding this with other authors, as a period of transition and evolution, are conflicting, unfinished, and undefined. We have observed in detail that the “formative graphic novel” analyzed here exhibits technical and design characteristics in which humor and comedy stand out, expressed both in cartoonish or visual forms, as well as in a language based primarily on satire. The conjunction of visual and narrative elements results in new, clear, and direct observations about

psychological processes and dynamics related to the need for change and transformation, since these are greatly accentuated and displayed.

From an artistic perspective, we conclude that this is a literary-artistic work, which we can eventually place within the realist “outsider” genre, since it directly reflects events common to a group during a specific period of development in which young people are frequently seen as “outsiders”. Likewise, for our purposes, we can consider it a “psychological” novel, since we recognize the humor and satire displayed as elements that allow and favor the expression and repair of emotions and feelings that normally have difficult access to consciousness. These latter feelings arise because they come from primitive forces that generate conflicts, anxiety, and guilt, making their expression and socialization difficult. The technical and narrative handling that gives rise to the use of humor and jokes allows, according to Freud (1905), “a release of unconsciously repressed emotions, and even better, the self-realization of something gratifying and magnificent.” We would like to add here the words “grandiose” or “utopian” as complementary to Freud’s conception. Although we find few expressions throughout the novel that suggest verbal “jokes,” we see a continuous satire within dramatic situations that usually generate anxiety because they involve anger, unpleasant surprises, frustrations, and the aforementioned emotions. However, the use of grotesque or distorted figures that evoke the comical and humorous reactions are directed to produce the effect of reducing anxiety, as well as, providing solutions, both in the novel itself, as well as in the intersubjectivity of the researcher. We see here the great utility for understanding adolescent narratives, by means of identifying one’s self with the characters, scenes and performances, since mental health professional staff is required to face such situations in their daily work.

Regarding this last argument mentioned above, the narrative, as seen in the coming-of-age novel studied here it can provide and lead to a better awareness of oneself own emotions. It also raises the possibility of learning and accepting feelings, in the same way we have evaluated sentiments and actions of the protagonist Penelope and her companions. It is worth mentioning that we consider the author’s decision to present such important topics in the form of a humorous comic to be highly effective, as the clearness and vividness of the ideas will facilitate understanding by those who support a narrative of transformation. Further research into this type of approach from an aesthetic and psychological framework will be necessary to deep into the possibilities for professional intervention in times of significant social change.

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